
Subject: Comment on changes proposed Therapeutics legislation
Date: Wednesday, 2 February 2011 5:24:21 PM

Dear Sir/ Madam

I have been practicing optometry since 1986. I have worked in both Queensland and South Australia. Currently, I have a family and am working part-time. I do not intend (by choice) to work full-time again.

I mainly work in general practice and see a lot of younger patients and specialise in children. In the past year, I have seen very few patients who would require therapeutics. These few, I have referred to another local optometrist who has therapeutics qualifications. When asked, none of my patients over the past 18 months, were aware that optometrists were able to prescribe therapeutics.

Personally, I would find doing the course difficult due to family commitments, financial and work commitments. I did not enter optometry to prescribe and do not wish to at this time. Based on my past year of practice, I would use therapeutics very seldom, making it definitely not cost or time effective for me to do the course.

I have no problem with other optometrists who wish to do therapeutics and can understand that they will alleviate some of the problems with getting to the insufficient numbers of doctors and ophthalmologists. However, I am sure that I am not the only optometrist who would be inconvenienced if therapeutics became mandatory for registration and would have to consider early registration rather than complete the course. I find this would be counter-productive, as it would reduce the numbers of practicing optometrists and therefore the numbers of the allied medical to help reduce the strain on the system, particularly in with Australia's aging population. This would also add pressure to the job market if the optometrists chose to find other work.

I did suggest, at the 2010 BLue Sky conference (South Australia), that there be a 2-tier system, to cover for those of us that would prefer to have 20 ish years left in their profession and not have to retire early due to such a restriction: Non-therapeutics registration (even if we had to put that on our doors) and Therapeutic registration.

I am hoping that in a land like Australia, where I prize our freedom, that the government would have the intelligence and leniency to allow already 'registered in Australia' optometrists a (Grandfather clause if you wish) chance to continue practicing until they retire and make use of their large pool of experience.

I hope both the OAA and Australian government will think carefully on this subject and take all situations into account.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Carlisle
(currently practicing in SA.)